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ABSTRACT

This practicum paper reports on an effort to address the problem of acting-out, withdrawn, and immature behavior of 15 middle-school special education students during social skills instruction. Classroom behavior-rating checklists, discipline reports, and a student survey provided evidence that these behaviors occurred more during social skills instruction than during academic classes. The goal of the practicum was to increase scores on the classroom behavior-rating checklist, reduce discipline reports, and improve the attitude of the students regarding social skills instruction. The "Skillstreaming the Adolescent" program, based on the social learning theory model, was initiated in conjunction with various behavior management techniques including increased opportunities for tangible reinforcement, interdependent group contingencies, and sending negative letters home when inappropriate behaviors occurred. Behavioral observations were made over the 12-week implementation period. Analysis revealed that, during social skill instruction, classroom behavior improved and discipline reports, because of misbehavior, decreased. Students indicated through responses to survey questions that they enjoyed the social skills instructional group sessions. Appendices include the classroom behavior rating checklist and the pre- and post-intervention survey of social skills. (Contains 36 references.) (Author/DB)

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ED 436 863

Design and Implementation of a Social-Skills Program for Middle School Students with Learning And Behavioral Disabilities

by
Robert Seferian
Cluster 90

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A Practicum I Report Presented to
The Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
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Abstract

Development and Implementation of a Social-Skill Instructional Program for Middle School Students with Learning and Behavioral Disabilities. Seferian, Robert J., 1999: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Special Education/Instruction/Curriculum/Classroom Management/Program Development.

This practicum was designed to address the problem of acting-out, withdrawn, and immature behavior of middle school special education students during social-skill instruction. Classroom behavior-rating checklists, discipline reports, and a student survey provided evidence that these behaviors occurred more during social-skill instruction than during academic classes. The goal of the practicum was to increase scores on the classroom behavior-rating checklist, reduce discipline reports, and improve the attitude of the students regarding social-skill instruction.

Modifications were made to address group size and composition. The *Skillstreaming the Adolescent* program was initiated in conjunction with various behavior management techniques. Among these were increased opportunities for tangible reinforcement, interdependent group contingency, and sending negative letters home when inappropriate behaviors occurred. Behavioral observations were made over the 12-week implementation period.

Analysis of the data revealed that classroom behavior during social-skill instruction improved. Discipline reports because of misbehavior during social-skill instruction decreased. Students indicated through responses to survey questions that they enjoyed the social-skill instructional group sessions.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Description of the Community

The setting for this practicum is a city in Southern New England. The population of the city was approximately 80,000; 69% White, 15% Black, 9% Hispanic, and 7% of Other Racial Heritage (Town Profiles, 1996-1997).

Economically, the city contains mostly service establishments. Retail and wholesale trade, finance, insurance, and real estate, as well as manufacturing are also represented. Approximately half of the work force resides in the city. There was a 4% unemployment rate, which was 1% below the county rate and 2% below the state's unemployment rate. Per capita income was approximately $36,000. This was 12% below the county per capita and 17% above the state's average per capita income (Town Profiles, 1996-1997).

Most of the housing is single unit, detached dwellings. The median price per residential unit was $160,000. This figure was 16% below the county median price per home and 21% above the state median price per home (Town Profiles, 1996-1997).

The school district serves approximately 11,500 students. Of these, 54% are White, 28% are Black, and 15% are of Hispanic descent. There are 12 elementary schools (K-5), 4 middle schools (6-8), and 3 high schools (9-12). Approximately 100 students attend vocational schools outside of the district and approximately 70 students attend special education programs outside of the district (Strategic School Profiles, 1996-1997).

Socio-economic status of the students in the district can be illustrated by the following data: 25% of the students in the district received free/reduced-priced meals

and 32% of the juniors and seniors worked 16 or more hours per week. At the same time, 77% of the graduating students pursued 4-year, 2-year, or other education after leaving the district (Strategic School Profiles, 1996-1997).

Special programs such as bilingual education, ESOL, and gifted & talented education are provided to approximately 26% of the student population. Special education services are provided in the following manner: 5 or fewer hours per week- 7%; 5.1-14.9 hours per week- 2%; 15 or more hours per week- 3% (Strategic School Profiles, 1996-1997).

Writer's Work Setting

The writer's work setting is the smallest of the four middle schools in the district. The school population of approximately 430 students is 43% White, 33% Black, 22% Hispanic, and 2% Asian American. Approximately 28% of the students received free/reduced-priced meals.

The school organization includes five interdisciplinary teams for the academic subjects of mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts and a "Rainbow Team". The Rainbow Team includes physical education, art, music, health, industrial technology, consumer sciences, computers, and reading. The student services department includes two full-time guidance counselors, a full-time nurse, a social worker, a half-time school psychologist, and a half-time speech and language therapist.

The school is located in an upper middle-class neighborhood, but is within 3 miles of several public housing projects. Approximately 300 students are provided transportation via public school busses. The school is within 1/2 mile of a high school and two elementary schools.

Students in the sixth and eighth grades scored the highest in the district on the State Mastery Tests of reading and writing (Strategic School Profile, 1996-1997). The mission statement of the school states "...is a caring place where the school community develops the students' highest potential through high academic expectation, respect, responsibility, and the celebration of diversity" (School Handbook, 1996-1997, p. 2).

The professional staff includes 40 teachers, 2 administrators, as well as the student service personnel mentioned previously. There are four non-certified instructional personnel on the staff as well as one half-time instructional assistant. The average teaching experience for the professional staff was 15 years. Over 83% have earned their Master's degree or above. Approximately 14% of the professional staff have been trained by the state as mentors, assessors, or cooperating teachers (Strategic School Profile, 1996-1997).

Of the approximately 430 students, approximately 13% receive special education services. Of these, 46 students received their services in the regular education setting. A special education teacher is assigned to each grade level. This teacher implements and monitors the individualized education plans (IEP) for the exceptional students in that grade. The remaining 10 students with special needs were provided services in the Extended Resource program. The students assigned to the Extended Resource program for the 1998-1999 school year have been diagnosed as follows: 3 seriously emotionally disturbed (SED), 3 educable mentally retarded (EMR), 2 speech/language disordered, and 2 learning disabled. Currently, three students are in Grade 8, six students are in Grade 7, and one student is in Grade 6. These students are given instruction in mathematics, language arts, science, and social

studies in the two Extended Resource classrooms. They are included in the regular education program for their Rainbow classes.

Two special education teachers and a full-time instructional assistant staff the Extended Resource program. Students have an IEP developed to address their special needs. Since varieties of disabilities are represented in the students, a variety of techniques, strategies, and special education methodologies are employed to provide appropriate services to these students.

Direct social-skills instruction has been provided to all of the students in the Extended Resource program. The teachers, instructional assistant, and school social worker have provided this instruction based on general school-related behavioral deficits.

A program-wide behavior management system is in place as well as unique systems for each classroom. Students are rewarded for adherence to the classroom and school guidelines, demonstration of prosocial skills, and academic achievement. Students also earned aversive consequences such as loss of reward, time-out, office referrals, and suspensions. The Extended Resource program is unique in that it uses two teachers and two classrooms. Students are grouped into small groups for part of the day and are scheduled for whole group activities for other parts of the day. While in small groups (3-7 students), students received their instruction in language arts, science, mathematics, or social studies. While in the large group (8-10 students), students received instruction in special areas such as world geography, geometry, or, most recently, fractions. Reward activities were done as a large group. Learning games such as multiplication bingo, state capital bingo, and "How Much Do You Remember?" were played during the time when students were in the large group. The

two teachers have worked together in the Extended Resource program for 12 years. Other Extended Resource programs throughout the district utilize one self-contained classroom; have one teacher assigned to the program with an instructional aide, or have been terminated because of the ineffectiveness of the program and unsuccessful classroom management of the staff at other buildings.

Writer's Role

The writer is a special education teacher assigned to the Extended Resource program. The writer was responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the IEPs for mathematics, social studies, and social skills for the students assigned to the Extended Resource program. Throughout the year, the two Extended Resource teachers consult with one another and the regular education staff to provide the students with the most effective program for each individual student. Behavior management plans are developed with the consultation of the social worker and the administrators. The writer participates throughout the year as a member of planning and placement teams (PPTs) that involve existing extended resource students or potential incoming students. Consultation and collaboration with the other student service personnel, regular education teachers, and administrators at the building and district level is essential to successful programming and implementation of the IEPs.

Chapter II: Study of the Problem

Problem Statement

The problem to be solved in this practicum was that students demonstrated acting-out, withdrawn, and immature behavior during social-skill group instruction more than during their academic class sessions.

Problem Description

Complaints and threats of noncompliance preceded the social-skill group instructional sessions by students in the Extended Resource program. During each instructional period, students talked among themselves, put their heads down, sulked, and rarely responded to instructional activities. Those students who did try to participate were easily drawn off-task by those who were resistant.

Two special education teachers, an instructional assistant, and the social worker (except Tuesdays) provided supervision, monitored behavior, and implemented the selected curriculum. The social-skill instructional group met three times over the 6-day (A-F) schedule for the entire year. The writer selected and presented the curriculum for the first part (September-January) of the year. The social worker selected and presented the material for the second half (January-June) of the year. Cooperative, preliminary planning by the instructional staff was cursory at best. Frustration among the teachers was apparent. Most of the instructional time was spent dealing with behavior problems.

Of the 15 Extended Resource students in the class of 1997-1998, 8 were assessed with SED. The remaining students had demonstrated deficits in social skills throughout their school years. The PPT had developed IEPs to address the

social/emotional needs of the SED students. The writer and the social worker consulted before the beginning of the 1997-1998 school year to plan for the implementation of the IEP objectives. It was determined that the entire Extended Resource group would benefit from direct social-skill training. A schedule of social-skill instructional groups was determined because of this consultation.

The year began with expectations from both the teachers and the students being exchanged. Individual rewards in the form of points earned toward free time and the reward store were available. A group reward in the form of a pizza party was offered if a group average of eight points could be achieved for 10 group sessions (individual points for the group were determined, summed, and divided by the number of students present during group for each session). The group did not earn the party until December. A contingency contract was developed for each student as part of the unit being studied. The target behavior was 75% accuracy on a final test of the material covered in the first unit of the social skill curriculum being used. Of the 15 students, 13 attained the 75% goal with extensive assistance from the instructional staff.

The social worker became the primary instructor for the second part of the year. He proposed a series of role-playing scenarios from a curriculum with which he was familiar. Due to his assignment to another building on Tuesdays and personal problems that occurred during the year, he was not available to run the group on a regular basis. When the sessions were implemented, the students had difficulty with the role-playing scenarios. Those not participating in the actual role-playing lost interest quickly or made disruptive comments about those role-playing. Those participating were often confused as to their roles. Many times the actors would

engage in rebuttals to the comments made from the observers. By the end of the year, the instructional staff had become so frustrated that the group period was often offered as a possible reward period as an incentive for appropriate behavior throughout the day.

Problem Documentation

The Extended Resource program provided students with the opportunity to earn reward points for demonstration of compliance with classroom guidelines, prosocial skills, and academic achievement. Teachers monitored student behavior in reference to 10 behavioral objectives. These objectives were known and understood by the students (see Appendix A for an example of the classroom behavior-rating checklist).

A plus (+) or a zero (0) were used to indicate whether the individual objectives were met or not achieved for each class period. Table 1 shows the mean scores for each student on the behavior-rating scale for 20 group sessions from 1/25/98 through 4/16/98. With a score of 8 representing the basal acceptable score, 5 of 15 students averaged below 8. Of the 15 students, 2 achieved a borderline score of between 8.0 - 8.5. Of the nine students returning to the Extended Resource program for the 1998-1999 school year, three students averaged below the 8-point level of acceptable behavior on the rating scale. Of these three students, two were diagnosed as SED. The third student was diagnosed as SED but had his diagnosis changed to EMR after his last PPT meeting (6/98).

Extended resource students were included in the regular education program for all Rainbow classes, lunch, recess, and assemblies. They passed from class-to-class at the same time as the general education population. During these times spent

away from the Extended Resource program, the students were expected to behave

Table 1

Mean Scores on Classroom Rating Scale for Extended Resource Social-Skill Group

Student	Mean Score
01	8.7
02	9.8
03	9.8
04	7.7
05	9.2
06	9.8
07	9.5
08	8.4
09	8.7
10	8.1
11	6.8
12	7.4
13	7.0
14	6.7
15	8.7

Note. The highest possible number of points on the rating-scale is 10. A score of 8 is considered acceptable.

according to the unique classroom guidelines and expectations of the teacher supervising the class or activity. If students behaved in a manner incompatible with the given expectations, teachers might choose to assign a time-out center referral.

This action was usually the result of a teacher's opinion that the disruptive behavior was not a serious infraction of the classroom guidelines and that the student would benefit from some time to think about his actions, then return to the classroom. If a teacher determined that a student's behavior was a serious infraction of the school or classroom guidelines, they may have chosen to write an office referral. These reports are sent directly to the administrator.

The principal or assistant principal addressed student consequences after receiving an office referral. If the administrator decided that an infraction was serious enough, they may have chosen to issue an in-school or out-of-school suspension. These can be from 1 day to 10 days in duration. Table 2 shows the discipline reports and suspensions for the Extended Resource students for the time from 9/97 - 4/98. Of the 15

students, 3 students have been suspended for more than 10 days. Of the 15 students, 3 have been referred to the time-out center 10 or more times during this time.

Of the nine students returning to the Extended Resource program for the 1998-1999 school year, six have earned more than three referrals to the time-out center. Of these, one SED student received 16 time-out center referrals. These were the result of disruptive behavior during the social-skill instructional group over the course of the 1997-1998 school year. The student re-diagnosed as EMR received eight referrals to the time-out center for similar reasons. Over the course of the 1997-1998 school year, three students earned between three and five referrals to the time-out center due to inappropriate behavior during social-skill instructional group.

Student behavior during social-skill instruction clearly showed that five of the students were behaving, on the average, below the acceptable level for a successful

classroom experience. With these students misbehaving, the remaining students

Table 2

Extended Resource Student Discipline Reports and Suspensions

Student	Time-out Center	Office Referrals	Suspensions
01	2	0	0
02	0	1	0
03	0	0	0
04	9	5	13
05	3	0	0
06	2	4	12
07	10	4	0
08	1	5	2
09	1	2	2
10	7	0	11
11	12	3	0
12	1	1	0
13	7	6	0
14	23	3	5
15	3	0	0

experienced difficulty learning and the entire group became very difficult to manage. Very few social skills were learned.

The number of discipline reports and suspensions received by the Extended Resource students demonstrated that there was a need for social-skill training. The

students' deficiencies in social skills and behavioral self-control resulted in numerous disciplinary actions by the regular education staff when these students interacted with their peers and teachers in the regular education setting. The data also showed a lack of generalization of the appropriate social skills that the students had demonstrated in the Extended Resource program.

A survey was given to the Extended Resource students concerning their feelings about social-skill instructional group (see Appendix B for the survey and results). The writer administered the survey orally before a group session. According to the results of this survey, 7 of 14 students participating in the survey responded that they enjoyed social skills group very much. Of the 14 students, 4 responded that they do not enjoy the group at all. Of the 14 students, 8 responded that they would improve the group by including more role-playing, 6 responded that they would decrease the talk and increase the activities. Of the 14 students, 5 responded that instruction in social skills makes them feel good, 6 responded that they feel badly about having to receive social skill instruction. Of the 14 students, 7 responded that they believed that the length of the group should remain at a full period, 5 would like to see the group cancelled altogether. When asked about their behavior during social skill instruction, 6 students responded that they try their best to listen and participate, 2 responded that they disrupted by talking or fooling around. Of the 14 students, 2 students did not respond to this item.

According to this survey, most students enjoyed social-skills instruction, would increase role-playing to improve the group, don't really like the idea of having to receive social-skill instruction, were satisfied with the duration of the sessions, and did their best to listen and participate during the group.

Causative Analysis

The size of the social-skill instructional group, 15 students, was too large for effective instruction. Consultation with the school psychologist and the social worker revealed that most group work that they did was with groups consisting of between five and eight students. Lower numbers were especially necessary when working with a group which included such a diverse range of cognitive and affective disabilities.

Tangible rewards, such as snacks or stickers, were not offered during social-skill group instruction. The points earned for appropriate behavior during academic classes did not seem to be effective during social-skill instructional group. Students lacked an internal motivation to behave during social-skill group instruction.

Since social-skill instruction is not included in the language arts, science, social studies, or mathematics curriculums, grades did not appear on student report cards. Report cards and interim reports only reported the progress in the four subjects mentioned above as well as any elective courses in which the students had participated during the quarter. Behavior was reported with a coding system. A letter or several letters appeared next to the effort grade. Parents were required to read the letter codes and refer to a key located on the report card to translate the letters to statements describing behavior for the quarter. Students have shown great interest in their report card grades and their interim reports. Students knew that no grades or behavior report from social-skill instructional group would appear on their report cards or interim reports. The only indication of failure to achieve social-skill objectives would appear on the IEP of the student. These were reviewed annually. Most parents chose not to attend annual review meetings.

The reward store was stocked with snacks, juice, and special school supplies such as fancy pens and pencils. When the students knew that the reward store was going to be opened, or that free time would follow a class where all students behaved at or above the 8-point mark, students' behavior improved. The reward store was not used as an incentive to increase positive behavior during social-skill group instruction.

Due to the inability of the group to observe and participate in role-playing scenarios, the role-playing lessons were stopped. Homework was not assigned for any of the lessons. The lack of role-playing scenarios resulted in an inability of the students to perceive the skills taught as real-life situations. The lack of homework sent the message that the material presented was not important. In addition, the lack of homework resulted in an inability to generalize the social skills covered in the group to different situations and environments.

Students verbalized their disappointment with the social-skill instructional group. The negative comments set a negative tone during the groups. Younger students would see and hear the older students behaving in a negative manner and modeled that behavior. The negative chain reaction resulted in problems within the group. Groups can be well planned and the teacher can be highly competent and motivational, but low student motivation and increased resistance to training will create problems within the group (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997).

Although the social-skill instructional groups attempted to teach prosocial skills to the students, many of the students were very well versed in antisocial behaviors. Some students had seen antisocial behavior modeled by significant individuals in their lives. Some had been reinforced for behaving in an antisocial

manner. Learning behaviors that were contrary to this model was difficult (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997).

Of the 15 students assigned to the Extended Resource program, 8 were diagnosed as SED. The inability to behave in a socially acceptable manner is a major characteristic of students with serious emotional disturbances (Sasso, Melloy, & Kavale, 1990). These characteristics became apparent when the students were put into the large group and required to practice prosocial behavior.

The point system used in the Extended Resource program awarded students for being on-time and prepared, complying with directions, being quiet, and completing their given assignments. The point system was not designed to reward students for appropriate management of anger, impulse control, or productive expressions of uncomfortable feelings. The lack of reinforcement of these affective skills reduced the frequency of these behaviors (Jones, 1996).

Literature Review

The purpose of this review was to uncover the literature-based causes of the behavior-management problem during social-skill instructional group. The review was limited to research and articles written within the past 10 years. The ERIC, PsychInfo, Proquest, and Wilson Educational Abstracts electronic databases as well as a review of the reference lists were used to access information. Research and articles on the need for social-skill training, current trends in the practice of social-skill instruction, and possible causes for disruptive behavior during instruction have been investigated.

The state requires social-skill training for students diagnosed as SED (Department of Education, Guidelines for Identifying and Educating Students with

Serious Emotional Disturbance, 1997). The state *Guidelines* further stated that student IEPs must contain objectives for social-skill development and a plan for applying these skills in a variety of situations during the school day (p. 43). According to Morgan and Jenson (1988), social-skill training should hold an equal priority as academic instruction when programming for students with behavior disorders. If behaviors that are reduced through behavior-management programs are not replaced with prosocial behaviors, these antisocial behaviors will return. Learning social skills is important for all students but absolutely essential in the programming for students with serious emotional disturbance (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998).

The socially unskilled student is characterized by a propensity to get into fights, being unpopular with peers and adults, and being uncaring about others. Often these individuals do not follow the accepted norms of a school community. They curse, talk back to teachers, argue with peers, and refuse to recognize the rights of others. They have great difficulty accepting any inappropriate behavior from others. Students who lacked social skills have difficulty adjusting to school, are at-risk for dropping-out of school, and represent a disproportionate number of those children referred to children's mental health agencies (Matson & Ollendick, 1988). Dodge (1989) stated that students who demonstrated difficulty getting along with their classmates at age 8 were also at-risk for psychoses in young adulthood and dishonorable discharge from military service. The nature of SED is manifest in a student's inability to behave in a socially acceptable manner (Sasso, Melloy, & Kavale, 1990). Because of this primary characteristic, behavior in a classroom situation will tend to be disruptive, inappropriate, and difficult to manage.

The teaching of social skills in the public education system has flourished in recent years. This growth in the teaching of social skills is concomitant with the influx of social-skill training programs. Skills-training programs, as opposed to behavioral approaches, are more likely to result in generalization of social skills to different environments (Dodge, 1989). Ciechalski and Schmidt (1995) reported that a skills-training program, Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984), positively affected the social relations of fourth grade students with special needs. These students also increased their positive interactions with their non-disabled peers. Miller, Midgett, and Wicks (1992) found that middle school students were able to perceive behavior changes in themselves after participating in the Skillstreaming the Adolescent (Goldstein, Sprafkin, Gershaw, & Klein, 1980) program. Middle school teachers also perceived positive social-skill growth in the students who participated in the Skillstreaming program. Dryfoos (1991) examined some 100 programs that have focused on changing high-risk behaviors such as acting-out in school. Social-skill training was common to all of the programs.

Meadows, Neel, Parker, and Timo (1991) examined the value placed on certain social skills. Participants were secondary students, their parents, and their teachers. Of the six groups studied, only the group of students with behavior disorders did not feel that social skills associated with getting along with adults were important. These students often found themselves getting in trouble for lacking the very skills that they found unimportant. Students with behavior disorders often engage in what Rhode, Jenson, and Reavis (1993) described as coercive pain control. When given directions, these students will involve the teacher (or anyone giving them directions) in a five-step process that resulted in the teacher withdrawing the request

and the student avoiding the "pain" of compliance. Dunlap and Kern (1996) discussed a common behavior of students with learning and behavior problems. These students, when confronted with a task that they felt was undesirable, would engage in what the authors called escape responding. In essence, students would choose to behave in a manner that would most likely result in being removed from class rather endure an undesirable lesson.

Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) have described numerous ways that students in social-skill instructional groups resist participation. These behaviors have been grouped into the following categories: inactivity, hyperactivity, active resistance, aggression, and cognitive inadequacies and emotional disturbance. A brief description of each category follows. These definitions are adapted from *Skillstreaming the Adolescent* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997, pp. 135-139).

Inactivity, or minimal participation, can be the result of apathy, lack of sleep, or physical illness. Apathy takes the form of unresponsiveness to any strategy the teacher uses to stimulate participation. At times, falling asleep occurs.

Hyperactivity can be described in several ways. *Digression* refers to a highly motivated desire to move the lesson in a different direction than the teacher intended. This could be the result of a strong negative feeling associated with the skill being taught. *Monopolizing* involves behaviors that are intended to result in more attention being directed toward the student. *Interruption* is very similar to monopolizing. This type of resistance may involve breaking into teaching, asking constant questions, or giving unsolicited "help". *Excessive restlessness* refers to more physical forms of hyperactivity. Fidgeting while seated, rocking, drumming, or actually getting up and pacing are all included in this area.

Active resistance includes behaviors that are participatory, but directed toward a personal agenda as opposed to the objective being taught. *Passive-aggressive isolation* is behavior that is beyond simple apathy or being off-task. This behavior is the deliberate shutting down of involvement with the purpose of non-compliance.

Negativism can be demonstrated in overt signals that send the message that students do not wish to participate in instruction whatsoever. Open refusals to cooperate, complete work, or leaving the group are common to this type of resistance.

Aggression can be manifested in sarcastic comments or put-downs. Bullying and intimidation can be common problems in social-skill instructional groups. Threats and actual assaults are the most extreme forms of aggression that can disrupt a social-skill instructional session.

Cognitive inadequacies and emotional disturbance can cause students to disrupt a session. The inability to pay attention for more than a brief period may be the result of a cognitive impairment. These same cognitive deficits may hold students back from understanding the content of the lesson. Due to certain cognitive inadequacies, some students may not be able to remember the content of the lessons. Emotional disturbance can lead to behaviors such as talking to oneself, making incoherent statements to the group, or becoming angry or sad for no apparent reason. Each of these behaviors has the potential to disrupt the instructional group.

DeLude, Fagerson, Gruchot, Keating, and Slovey (1997) reported that seventh and eighth grade students demonstrated acting-out behaviors that disrupted the instructional process. These behaviors included speaking out of turn, failure to share thoughts or ideas, put-downs of their peers, and failure to share materials during small-group lessons. DeLude et al. surmised that the causes behind these anti-social

behaviors stemmed from a variety of societal factors. Predominant among these were negative messages received through the media, the lack of positive role models in the home and community, and cultural animosity between the diverse ethnic groups represented in the group being studied. Also cited as a cause in this study was the lack of positive reinforcement by teachers during small-group instruction. Teachers tended to reward individual performance over cooperative actions.

Doughty (1997) studied the effects of the Boys' Town Educational Model (BTEM; Boys Town, Nebraska, 1993) of social skill instruction on the behavior of 21 students diagnosed as seriously emotionally disturbed. These students ranged in age from 11-19 years. The group had experienced chronic, inappropriate classroom behavior and was referred to the more restricted self-contained classroom of an out-of-district placement center. Doughty (1997) suggested the lack of a social-skill instructional program offered through the public school system as a cause for the inappropriate behavior of the students. Because these students have not had the opportunity to learn the social skills necessary to succeed in the classroom, these students depended on the skills that they have acquired to survive on "the street".

Roy (1993) reported on his implementation of a social-skill instructional program with 20 SED students receiving their education at a private, non-profit, residential school. These students were not residents, but were the "Day School" clients. Although provided with small classes, some as small as four students, these students required increasingly more and more one-to-one counseling. This counseling was necessary to stabilize the students emotionally so that they could return to class. Roy (1993) described the students as "lacking the necessary skills to cope with the most basic classroom social demands" (p. 4). These students spent very

little time engaged in academic tasks. Their inappropriate behavior not only disrupted their class but others throughout the school. The author's causative analysis included the history of academic and social failure throughout the students' school-lives, very little support at home, and a minimum of support from the available community agencies. Many of the students came from homes in which the only adult present had significant emotional and/or social problems.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder is characterized by signs of developmentally inappropriate impulsivity, inattention, and hyperactivity. This condition in and of itself does not make a student eligible for special education services, but is often concomitant with SED or a learning disability. The cause for this condition is not clear. Each suggested causative factor, such as brain damage, heredity, or dietary factors have some empirical support, but there is no evidence that points to one specific cause. The best conclusion is that the condition is caused by a variety of factors (Breen & Altepeter, 1990).

Conduct and oppositional/defiant disorders were also discussed in the DSM IV (APA, 1994). Again, neither of these conditions makes one eligible for special education services but the symptoms are often found in students diagnosed as SED. Symptoms common to both disorders are violation of minor rules, argumentativeness, often blaming others for their behavior, and often deliberately doing something to annoy others. Breen and Altepeter (1990) stated that there are several causative factors that contribute to the emergence of conduct and oppositional defiant disorders. Evidence suggested that deficiencies in parenting skills and chronic maladaptive family interactions were primary to a majority of cases.

Meadows et al. (1991) stated that students with behavior disorders found social skills that were associated with getting along with adults to be of low priority. Of the six groups studied, the group of behavior disordered students was the only group to rank these skills as unimportant. The difference in the priorities of social skills between the adults and behavior-disordered students in a group will result in behavior management problems.

Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) stated that social-skill instructional groups would have behavior management problems although teachers are highly motivated and the groups are well planned. Student motivation and resistance to instruction were major causes of behavioral problems in the instructional groups. Since many of the students receiving social-skill instruction are proficient in anti-social behaviors, they will naturally resent instruction contrary to their way of doing things.

According to Jones (1996), many classroom behavior management systems were designed to keep the classroom quiet. Students were rewarded for staying on-task, remaining quiet during instruction, and completing the given assignment. This caused students to stifle their emotions. Appropriate expressions of anger, frustration, or resentment were not encouraged in these classrooms. When students were not encouraged and rewarded for appropriate expressions of these emotions, continued to display these emotions in the manner in which they felt comfortable. Many teachers over emphasized negative consequences for misbehavior and under emphasized positive consequences for appropriate behavior (Knitzer, Steinberg, & Fleisch, 1990).

Summary

Social-skill training is required by the state for students with serious emotional disturbance. Training in social-skill development is essential to successful

programming for students with behavior disorders (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1998; Morgan & Jenson, 1988). Students with poor social skills are often in conflict with their teachers and fellow students. These students are at-risk for serious problems later in life (Dodge, 1989; Matson & Ollendick, 1988). Social-skill training programs have been successful in teaching exceptional students prosocial skills and helping students to perceive themselves as socially competent (Ciechalski & Schmidt, 1995; Dodge, 1989; Dryfoos, 1991; Miller, Midgett, & Wicks, 1992).

Students with behavior disorders did not value as important social skills that involved appropriate interactions with adults. These students often found themselves in trouble because of the very same skills that they deemed unimportant. Students with behavior disorders often used coercion or escape techniques to avoid participation in lessons they felt were undesirable (Dunlap & Kern, 1996; Meadows et al., 1991; Rhode et al., 1993). Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) discussed several behaviors that caused disruptions to social-skill instructional groups. Included were inactivity, hyperactivity, aggressiveness, active resistance, cognitive inadequacies, and emotional disturbance.

The problem of inappropriate behavior and lack of social skills by special education students in the middle grades has been documented. Causes for the inappropriate behavior/social skills have included negative messages from the media, poor role models in the community, the lack of a systematic social-skill development program offered through the schools, and the lack of reinforcement for socially acceptable behavior (DeLude et al., 1997; Doughty, 1997; Roy, 1993). Mental disorders such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and oppositional defiant/conduct disorder have symptoms very close to those demonstrated by students

with serious emotional disturbance. Although there is no evidence pointing to a definitive cause for ADD/HD, poor parenting skills and chronic maladaptive family interactions have been associated with oppositional defiant/conduct disordered students (Breen & Altepeter, 1990). Behavior disordered students and secondary school teachers placed different values on certain social skills. Often, because of this, low student motivation and resistance to instruction caused problems in the training group, although the teacher was highly motivated and the lesson is well-planned (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997). Finally, classroom management systems in classes for behavior disordered students may cause inappropriate behavior. Many point systems were developed to keep the classroom quiet. Teachers in these classrooms under-emphasized positive consequences for appropriate displays of emotion and over-emphasized punishment for inappropriate behaviors (Jones, 1996; Knitzer, Steinberg, & Fleisch, 1990).

Chapter III: Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

During social-skill group instruction, students will demonstrate self-control, participate in lessons, and engage in developmentally appropriate behavior.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum:

Outcome 1. Each student will earn an average of eight points on the classroom behavior-rating chart over the 12-week implementation period. The teacher will observe the students during the social-skill instructional lessons and will record student behavior using (+) or (0) scoring on the 10-item behavior checklist. The total behavioral objectives met over the course of the session will be summed and recorded. These totals for each session will be averaged for each student at the completion of the implementation period.

Outcome 2. During the course of the 12-week implementation period, each student will receive no more than two referrals to the time-out center because of inappropriate behavior in the social-skill instructional group. Each referral will be collected throughout the implementation period. A tally will be completed after the completion of the implementation period

Outcome 3. Of the 10 students participating in the social-skill instructional group, at least 6 students will indicate that they have positive feelings regarding the social-skill instructional group after the 12-week implementation period. Measurement of feelings will be done through a teacher-made survey. Of the 10 students participating in the social-skill instructional group, at least 6 students will

respond that they enjoy the social-skill group instruction and have no bad feelings associated with receiving social-skill training. Of the 10 students participating in the social-skill instructional group, at least 6 students will respond that they would not change the format of the social-skill instructional group. Of the 10 students participating in the social-skill instructional group, at least 6 students will respond that they try their best to make positive contributions to the group.

Measurement of Outcomes

Each group of students assigned to the teacher's classroom was monitored through the classroom behavior-rating checklist. Individual students' scores were averaged at the day's end and recorded on a chart that was displayed in the classroom. Original daily checklists and classroom charts were saved throughout the year. The data contained in these recording instruments can be accessed at any time.

The teacher-made survey was administered orally. The questions were closed-ended, but up to four responses were given for each item. One item allowed the students to make suggestions if they were so inclined. Students checked the response that most closely fit their feelings in reference to the item.

A record of time-out referrals was kept in individual student behavior folders. Each referral included the student's name, the date, the time of the referral, and a reason for the referral. An area for the time-out center supervisor to note behavior while in the time-out center was also included.

Chapter IV: Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem to be solved was that students demonstrated more acting-out, withdrawn, or immature behavior during social-skill group instruction than during their academic class sessions. This behavior manifested itself through such actions as non-compliance, refusal to participate, shouting out of turn, and leaving the group during the lesson. Both students and teachers were frustrated and did not look forward to the social-skill group instructional period. It appeared that neither the behavior management system nor the presentation of the curriculum was effective during the group sessions.

This review was limited to the discovery of solutions concerning the problem of disruptive behavior in the social-skill instructional group. Literature published within the last 10 years was cited. The ERIC, PsychInfo, Proquest, and Wilson Educational Abstracts electronic databases as well as a review of the reference lists were used to access information. The areas of grouping, curriculum presentation and social-skill instructional models, and behavior management during group sessions were examined.

Matson and Ollendick (1988) discussed group size when describing social-skill instructional models. Groups of four to six students were found best when employing the cognitive behavior therapy model. If the social learning model was being used, and two leaders are present, then four to eight students can be trained adequately (p. 52). Roy (1993) implemented a social-skill instructional program for disruptive day-school students. These students demonstrated acting-out and highly

disruptive behaviors during their academic classes. Small groups of three students were given social-skill instruction. These students made noticeable improvement in their classroom behavior.

Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) discussed grouping students before initiating social-skill instruction. Two guidelines were given. First, students with similar deficiencies should be grouped together. The authors have developed an instrument that allows students to self-rate their social skills. A parallel instrument for teachers, parents, and others to complete is also available. Sugai and Lewis (1997) stated that ratings by others are more accurate than self-assessments. Other means of assessment included interviews, direct observation, and interviews with peers.

The second guideline Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) offered was that students who will be working together should receive social-skill instruction together. The authors stated that the environment and people in the group should be as close to the natural environment as possible. Roy (1993) offered a third suggestion for grouping students. The author stated that students should be grouped by their social compatibility. Roy (1993) stated that if students were not socially compatible, then instructors would spend most of their time in crisis intervention as opposed to teaching.

Morgan and Jenson (1988) suggested that social-skill instruction groups for middle school-aged students should be from 30 to 45 minutes in duration. The authors further commented that groups should meet at a minimum of once per week. Meeting three to four times over the course of a week would be ideal.

Matson and Ollendick (1988) have discussed several models of teaching social skills to adolescents. Operant conditioning, based on the research of B.F.

Skinner (1953) has been highly researched. Factors associated with operant conditioning include direct reinforcement of behavior and frequent use of tangible reinforcers. The performance of the students is under an external locus of control. This type of treatment is usually done on a one-to-one basis.

Matson and Ollendick described cognitive behavior therapy as treatment that focuses on internal events, primarily cognition. The factors associated with this model include the use of social reinforcement, self-reinforcement, and vicarious reinforcement. Direct reinforcement is not used very often. Verbal communication is required and students are required to express what they are thinking verbally. Treatment is usually done on a one-to-one basis.

The social learning theory approach, as described by Matson and Ollendick, puts great emphasis on modeling and role-playing. Social reinforcement as well as vicarious and direct reinforcement is used. Treatment is conducted with groups as well as in one-to-one situations.

Meadows et al. (1991) recommended that when designing a social-skill instructional program for adolescents with behavior disorders, the designers should become aware of those social skills that are of importance to the students. Students will be more likely to learn skills that they find important.

The Adolescent Curriculum for Communication and Effective Social Skills (ACCESS; Walker, Todis, Holmes, & Horton, 1988) has been developed to teach social skills to mildly handicapped middle and high school students. The target group should possess a fourth or fifth grade reading level. Other characteristics that the target group should possess include rudimentary language skills, the ability to benefit from role-playing activities, and basic academic engagement skills. The ACCESS

program is intended to teach students to analyze social situations and respond appropriately. Students are taught to evaluate their reactions and the outcomes of their behavior.

Walker, Todis, Holmes, and Horton described the curriculum that included 31 social skills in three skill areas: peer-related, adult-related, and self-related. The Triple A Strategy is of primary importance to all skills. This strategy includes assessing a situation, amending behavior to match the environmental situation, and acting upon the situation. Along with the Triple A Strategy, the critical features of a social skill are included with each new skill taught. Each social skill is broken down into between three and six critical behaviors that are necessary to perform the skill.

According to Walker, Todis, Holmes, and Horton, direct instruction is to be used to teach the ACCESS curriculum. The teacher's guide provides a scripted lesson plan for each session. Each lesson should take approximately 45 minutes to implement. ACCESS is taught through a 10-step procedure. Review of previous material and introduction of the new skill begin the lesson. Negative and positive examples of the skill are modeled. The critical skills of the new objective are reviewed. The central message, or explanation, of why the skill is important, is given. Role-playing is done and students are required to discriminate if the critical features were demonstrated. Lessons conclude with a discussion and a homework assignment.

The Prepare Curriculum (Goldstein, 1988) is made up of 10 courses designed to teach 10 social skill subgroups. Teachers are urged to choose the subgroup that is of particular interest to them based on the social-skill needs of their students. The Prepare Curriculum has been designed to teach prosocial skills to adolescents who

have externalized or internalized behavior disorders.

Goldstein stated that the Prepare Curriculum strives to teach prosocial behaviors that replace negative behaviors. The program is based on three guiding principles. First, students can learn new social skills. Second, students can learn to generalize newly learned social skills. Finally, these new skills will result in raised self-esteem, successful completion of school, and the acquisition of a job. Each of the 10 courses addresses a specific social skill. Each course can be taught to small or large groups. The first five courses have preplanned lessons included with the curriculum.

Goldstein further stated that the Prepare Curriculum also provides procedures to enhance generalization and maintenance of skills. Classroom management strategies are also included in the teacher's manual. Information on where to obtain formal training is included.

Skillstreaming the Adolescent (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) is based on the principles of structured learning. This approach includes the procedures of modeling, role-playing, performance feedback, and generalization training. These procedures are used throughout the instructional sequence.

Goldstein and McGinnis encouraged trainers to read the manual and purchase the audio or video instructional tapes to prepare for teaching the curriculum. The developers include extensive information on trainee selection, grouping procedures, and behavior management strategies for group work. Two sessions per week were recommended.

Goldstein and McGinnis have divided Skillstreaming the Adolescent into six instructional areas. Group I, beginning social skills, involved interpersonal skills

such as listening, conversation, and introductions. Group II, advanced social skills, also involved interpersonal skills. Examples of these include asking for help, joining-in, giving and following directions, and apologizing. Group III, dealing with feelings, concentrated on skills such as knowing and expressing your feelings, understanding the feelings of others, and dealing with fear. Group IV, skill alternatives to aggression, focused on such objectives as negotiating, using self-control, and keeping out of fights. Skills for dealing with stress were covered in Group V. Examples of topic areas include dealing with embarrassment, responding to persuasion, and dealing with accusations. The sixth group, planning skills, covered such areas as setting a goal, making a decision, and concentrating on a task.

Goldstein and McGinnis included suggestions on trainee motivation and dealing with resistance from trainees. A chapter on enhancing generalization is included. An annotated bibliography and Skillstreaming materials are available to the reader.

An evaluation of a context-based social skills training program for children with learning disabilities was conducted by Wiener and Harris (1997). The study included 45 children between the ages of 8-13. These students received most of their education in a self-contained placement. The first of three groups received 6-weeks of a social skill-training program. The second group received 12 weeks of the training. The third group received no social skill training. The social skills training program used was a board game adapted from Social Life (Griffiths, 1991, as cited in Wiener & Harris, 1997). Groups of four would play with a teacher or instructional assistant. Cards with different social situations were drawn and acted upon. Students received or paid play money after each turn. Teachers, trained over a 1-week period,

would monitor the game and question students regarding their responses. The teachers were also trained to teach students to observe and assess the social decisions of others, identify personal problems, generate possible alternative solutions to social problems, and identify possible "road blocks" to overcoming the social problems. The program also included homework assignments adapted from the Skillstreaming program (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984, as cited in Wiener & Harris, 1997). Participants were given the Structured Learning Skills Checklist (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984, as cited in Wiener & Harris, 1997) as a self-rating instrument before the intervention.

Weiner and Harris found that students who received social-skill training through the adapted Social Life program over a 6-week period made gains in social skills. Positive gains in behavior were also observed in this group. The treatment also resulted in holding-off deterioration in peer relations.

Virtual reality has been used to teach social skills to adolescents (Muscott & Gifford, 1994). This approach links the high interest of computer-generated imagery and the necessity of real life scenarios in teaching social skills. Hardware and software were expensive and limited at the time the article was written, but advancement in these areas is imminent. The future is promising for this medium. Bain, Houghton, and Carroll (1995) reported that interactive video-based modeling had a limited effect on social skill acquisition in their study involving sixth and seventh grade learning-disabled students. When role-playing was added to the video-based modeling, no significant increase or decrease in social skill acquisition was reported.

Social-Metacognitive-Strategy Training (SMST) was successful in teaching

social skills to children between the ages of 9 and 14 years with moderate developmental delays (Rosenthal-Malek & Yoshida, 1994). The SMST program was designed to be used with an entire class in a setting where free play can occur. Three phases are included in this type of training.

Rosenthal-Malek and Yoshida stated that, initially, children are taught self-questioning in a formal, teacher-centered instructional phase. A 10-minute period was used to teach students six questions that they must ask themselves when in the free-play situation. Students were then put into a free-play situation for 50 minutes. The trainers observed without intervention unless they noticed a lack of a particular skill. The final phase was designed to promote generalization of the metacognitive training to different environments throughout the day. Trainers would encourage the use of the strategy using praise and other means of social and direct reinforcement. Rosenthal-Malek and Yoshida found that students acquired the social skills of helping, sharing, and taking turns as well as the elimination of aggressive and hostile behavior. These behaviors were generalized to the school playground.

Patton (1995) described a program that teaches using self-talk. Rational behavior training (RBT) was used with middle school-aged students diagnosed as seriously emotionally disturbed. These students received services in a self-contained classroom. The seven-step process is based on the theories of operant conditioning, cognitive behavior, rational emotive therapy, and behavior rehearsal. RBT is complimentary to other social-skill training programs because it teaches students to monitor their self-talk before making responses.

The seven steps Patton suggested for teaching RBT included (a) how the brain works to produce emotions, (b) how to control thought and thus control emotion, (c)

how to use homework to determine if thinking is rational or irrational, (d) how to change irrational to rational thinking, (e) how to use relaxation and imagery to practice rational behavior, (f) how to self-monitor, and (g) how to use the five rules of rational thinking. Although there are seven essential areas in the RBT program, the author stressed that more than seven sessions be used to teach the objectives contained in the seven lesson areas. Since each phase is based upon the mastery of the previous phase, modifications may be necessary to insure that students have mastered the objectives in each phase (p. 135-139). Eggert (1994) has developed a script that teachers may use to teach students guided imagery and progressive relaxation.

Social skills are necessary only when students are in social situations (Johnson & Johnson, 1990). For this reason teaching social skills while in cooperative-work groups is logical. Johnson and Johnson discussed five steps to teaching social skills through cooperative-learning groups. First, students must feel that their lives would be better if they knew and learned new skills. Second, students must understand the new skill and when it is best used. Third, students must practice the skill often. Fourth, students must process when and how often they use the new skill. And, fifth, students must continue to practice the new skill.

Johnson and Johnson (1990) suggested that teachers use bonus points when they observe the group using the targeted social skill. Points are to be earned but never taken away. The teacher should summarize the daily points to reinforce the use of the targeted social skill. A reward should be included for the accumulation of a preset number of points. The groups and the entire class can earn bonus points toward the reward.

Regular education personnel are of great importance when teaching social skills to students with emotional/behavioral disorders (Cartledge & Johnson, 1996). By including students with E/BD in cooperative learning groups, regular education teachers will foster the skills of working together, helping others, and encouraging others. Cartledge and Johnson also discussed cross-aged tutoring as a method of increasing social skills. Older students with disabilities were given the opportunity to help younger disabled students. The older students benefited from the opportunity to give rather than receive help.

Whittaker and Votel (1995) described an inclusion program that integrated the efforts of regular educators, special educators, and mentors to increase socially acceptable behavior of students who were demonstrating troubling behaviors. The school guidance counselor and mentors provided a social-skill training experience once a week to the targeted students. The goal was to increase the students' ability to interact appropriately with their peers and with adults. The topics of coping, relating, communicating, and cooperating were stressed. Mentors provided follow-up throughout the week. A review of the program suggested positive results at the half-year mark.

Besides curriculum and presentation of social-skill instruction, several behavior management procedures will increase on-task behavior, interpersonal relations within the group, and promote successful learning of the social skills presented. Premack's Principal (1959) stated that a high frequency behavior would reinforce a low frequency behavior. The reinforcer must always follow the desired behavior. Also known as "Grandma's Law", the Premack Principle is an "if/then" proposition. For example, "If each individual in the group can wait to be called upon

before speaking out, then the group will have the opportunity to spend points at the reward store." Teachers who reverse the order, especially when working with students with behavior disorders, will find that the desired behavior will not occur (Rhode, Jenson, & Reavis, 1993).

Skinner, Cashwell, and Dunn (1996) described the difference between independent and interdependent group contingency management systems. Independent group contingency plans include the same target behaviors and reinforcers for each member of a group. Only those who meet the specific criteria of the target behavior will have access to the reward. Interdependent group contingency plans allow access to the reinforcement contingent upon some aspect of the group's behavior. Either the entire group receives the reward or none of the group receives the reward. Averages, highs, or minimums can be set as the target behavior. This method of behavior management provides for a common goal for the entire group. Interdependent contingency models help groups of students to work together toward a common goal- increasing group cohesion.

Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) discussed the use of positive reinforcement to motivate adolescents during social-skill instructional groups. The following strategies were suggested when using positive reinforcement.

1) Make sure that there is a direct, non-ambiguous, connection between the desired behavior and the reinforcement (p. 149).
2) Reward the students very soon after the desired behavior is demonstrated (p. 150).
3) Be consistent with the reinforcement (p. 150).
4) Reinforcement should be given for every instance of the desired behavior at first, then reduced as the sessions continue (p. 150-151)

5) The amount of reinforcement should be determined through observation. If the students work energetically, then begin to fade, chances are that the amount of reinforcement is too high. If the students enjoy the reinforcement, but will not work for it, then the amount may be too small. Observation will show whether the reinforcement is being given in the appropriate amount (p. 151).
6) Varying the reinforcement, whether it is tangible or social reinforcement, will maintain the effectiveness of the reinforcement (p. 151-152).
7) Although tangible, or primary, reinforcers are effective at first, the use of social, or secondary reinforcers, is most likely to result in enduring change. Tangible reinforcers should be paired with social reinforcers such as a positive comment, a smile, a nod, or an appreciative look (p. 152).

Jones (1996) discussed four major categories of interventions for students. Ecological/environmental factors such as antecedent events that precede behavioral outbursts should be examined. Once these environmental/ecological events are identified, appropriate interventions can be initiated.

According to Jones, environmental changes will help to alter the behavior of SED students but specific skills need to be learned if these students are to succeed in settings other than the special education classroom. Self-instruction, social problem solving, and anger management are examples of these skills. These skills can be taught through direct instruction.

Jones described contingency management methods such as a point system or behavioral contracts that help students with SED to maintain in the school setting. Such methods as positive reinforcement, time-out, response cost, and extinction help students to recognize limits. These systems and techniques should be designed to

allow for expression of feelings and emotions. If these techniques are designed to suppress the expression of emotions, then students with SED will not learn to express their feelings appropriately.

Finally, Jones suggested that interventions include a component to increase self-esteem. Through insight-oriented instruction, students can be introspective and recognize their own limits. Through this process, students can be taught to self-talk and other affective techniques for increasing self-esteem.

Colvin, Ainge, and Nelson (1997) described techniques that will defuse confrontations. Defusion is an approach that is effective with students who are continually confrontational. The techniques described included focusing on the task to defuse minor attention-getting behaviors, presenting options privately in the context of a rule violation, and pre-teaching and presenting choices to establish limits and defuse confrontations.

Colvin, Ainge, and Nelson suggested focusing on the task to defuse minor attention-getting behaviors involved a continuum of steps. First, attend to the students who are on-task. Ignore students who are displaying inappropriate behavior. Next, redirect the students to the given task. Do not respond to the problem behavior. Finally, present a choice between the expected behavior and a minor consequence.

Colvin, Ainge, and Nelson suggested a second technique that involved presenting options privately in the context of a rule violation. During a confrontational situation, teachers should, (a) state the expectation, (b) direct the student to solve the problem in relation to the expectation, and (c) present options to the student which will help to solve the problem. Giving options will allow the student to feel that he is not being trapped into a corner.

The third technique suggested by Colvin, Ainge, and Nelson involved pre-teaching and presenting choices to establish limits and defuse noncompliance. Pre-teaching at a neutral time to show the steps, give an explanation, and describe the consequence associated with a certain behavior will help students to know how to behave and what to expect if a certain behavior occurs. Delivering information to students without being confrontational can be accomplished through (a) placing the responsibility on the student to change the behavior, (b) allowing a few seconds for the student to decide, and (c) withdrawing from the student and attending to others. This allows students to focus on their decision, not the teacher.

Leach and Tan (1996) found that the use of negative letters sent to the homes of disruptive secondary students helped increase on-task behavior. Negative letters had a greater effect than sending positive letters or a combination of both negative and positive letters. The increased on-task behavior of those students who received the negative letters seemed to positively effect the on-task behavior of those who did not receive any letters.

Leach and Tan included a group of secondary school children in a metropolitan area in their study. The students had been demonstrating acting-out behavior in the form of talking-out without permission, making noises, and disturbing their classmates. The average age in one of the three experimental groups was 12.3 years (approximately 7th grade).

Leach and Tan found that the positive effects of the negative letters sent home were consistent across all three groups. The authors suggested that the negative feedback to the home last for only a short period. Teachers should take this time to establish a more positive behavior management system. The teachers involved

reported that sending the letters took very little time and effort on their part.

Horne and Sayger (1990) described effective disciplinary methods for working with adolescents with conduct and oppositional-defiant disorders. Among these were ignoring, Premack's principle, natural and logical consequences, and time-out. Since Premack's principle was discussed earlier, it will not be discussed here. The authors included guidelines for parents as well as teachers.

According to Horne and Sayger, ignoring can be used to reduce non-threatening and/or attention-getting behaviors. These behaviors include whining, complaining, and acting bored. An important consideration when using ignoring is whether the attention of the adult is important enough to the child to make a difference. If others are reinforcing the student, then ignoring will not be effective.

Horne and Sayger stated that natural consequences referred to the results that would occur without adult intervention. Logical consequences referred to the results that occur when rules or guidelines are violated. Consequences at school should be understood by the families and used at home. If consequences are not used consistently, students will not learn the skills for which the consequences are associated.

Horne and Sayger suggested time-out as one logical consequence that both parents and teachers can use to help decrease unacceptable behaviors. Time-out involves a short isolation following an instance of misbehavior. Time-out should not be used as a method to "get even" with the student for misbehaving. Time-out should be used as a means for the child to calm down, think about possible alternatives to the inappropriate behavior, and then reenter the activity.

Horne and Sayger also suggested that the school, the family, and any outside

agencies associated with the child be included in the interventions used with the child. As the child notices that all of the adults in their lives are included in their skill building, then the message becomes clear that the new skills are important. Consistency between the school, home, and other agencies will help the child to learn the new behaviors.

Group size, as discussed by Matson and Ollendick (1988) and Roy (1993), should be fewer than eight students. With the current Extended Resource population at 10 students, developing groups of fewer than 8 was easily accomplished. Grouping students according to common deficiencies and with those peers with whom they work (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) are solutions that were easily arranged. As Sugai and Lewis (1997) stated, ratings by others are more accurate in assessing social-skill deficiencies than self-ratings. The Teacher/Staff Skillstreaming Checklist (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) was easily attainable and a cost-effective instrument to assess the social-skill deficiencies of the students. Grouping students according to their social compatibility (Roy, 1993) was not as easily accomplished. Some students had such significant social-skill deficits that compatibility with any other students was questionable. Scheduling social-skill instructional groups at least once per week and for at least 30 minutes (Morgan & Jenson, 1988) was accomplished over the existing 6-day (A-F) schedule.

The operant conditioning model of social-skill instruction is usually done on a one-to-one basis (Matson & Ollendick, 1988). This was not a viable solution. The overload of students on the other Extended Resource teacher would make one-to-one instruction inefficient. The use of direct reinforcement was an idea that stemmed from the operant conditioning model and was incorporated into the solution.

Cognitive behavior therapy places strong emphasis on cognition (Matson & Ollendick, 1988). Due to the limited cognitive ability of several students in the Extended Resource group, this model was inappropriate. In addition, since this model is usually done on a one-to-one basis, it was ruled out as a solution for the same reason as stated for the operant conditioning model.

The social learning theory model was the most appropriate model for the problem at hand. Modeling and role-playing scenarios were used last year. These methods were familiar to most of the students. The combination of direct, social, and vicarious reinforcement was very similar to the existing system of behavior management. Since this model is used with groups, (Matson & Ollendick, 1988), there was no unnecessary burden on the other Extended Resource teacher.

The ACCESS program (Walker, Todis, Holmes, and Horton, 1988) required participants to read on the fourth or fifth grade level. Several students in the Extended Resource group do not read on this level, making the ACCESS program inappropriate. The idea of demonstrating the wrong way to perform the social skill was an interesting and easily implemented strategy to teaching social skills.

The Prepare Curriculum (Goldstein, 1988) was a viable solution. Unfortunately, the course and materials would have to be purchased. Being over 10 years old, availability of the program may be limited.

The Skillstreaming the Adolescent program (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) is based on the social learning theory model of instruction. The manual and materials were easily accessible and within the budget allotted to the Extended Resource program for purchases during the school year. Because of the basis in social learning theory, behavior management and trainee motivational strategies, and diverse

instructional areas, the Skillstreaming program seemed to be the most appropriate program for the Extended Resource group.

Weiner and Harris (1997) suggested the use of a board game to teach social skills. This game was an adaptation of an existing game. Homework assignments adapted from the Skillstreaming the Adolescent program (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1984) were assigned. This solution was not appropriate due to the time and effort necessary to adapt a board game to fit the needs of the students. In addition, adapting Skillstreaming homework assignments was inefficient, considering that the Skillstreaming the Adolescent (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) program included homework assignments.

Although virtual reality is an interesting and innovative approach to social-skill training (Muscott & Gifford, 1994), the equipment necessary was much too expensive at the time of the practicum to be considered as a solution. To use video-based modeling as Bain, Houghton, and Carroll, (1995) described would also involve expensive materials and equipment as well as time to film the modeling sequences. Since the video-based modeling in the study by Bain, Houghton, and Carroll (1995) had little effect on the students involved; there was little evidence that this procedure would be effective with the Extended Resource group.

Social-Metacognitive-Strategy Training (Rosenthal-Malek & Yoshida, 1994) was designed to be used in a free-play setting. There are three reward periods built into the existing schedule, but not all students chose the same activity. Some stayed in the classroom while others used the gymnasium. In addition, Rosenthal-Malek and Yoshida (1994) suggested a 60-minute period. This did not occur in the schedule.

Rational behavior training as described by Patton (1995) is an interesting

compliment to a social-skill-training program. The seven-step process is complex, but basic components such as using relaxation and imagery and self-monitoring was included in the solution. The author had access to relaxation and imagery exercises as well as several methods to teach self-monitoring.

Several authors advocated the use of cooperative learning and inclusion to teach social skills (Cartledge & Johnson, 1996; Johnson & Johnson, 1990; Whitaker & Votel, 1995). Although these methods are practiced in a natural setting and in practical situations, inclusion in regular education classes is a decision made by the planning and placement team. The author did not have the power to include Extended Resource students in regular education classes. In addition, the schedule currently used did not allow the author to observe the students in the regular education classes in which they were included.

Cartledge and Johnson (1996) suggested cross-aged tutoring to promote social-skill development. The academic ability of the older students was not necessarily above that of the younger students. At the time of the practicum, cross-aged tutoring was not appropriate.

Whitaker and Votel (1995) described a program that included mentors in the social-skill instructional phase. Mentors are assigned through a program directed by the central office. The scope of this type of program is complex and could not be achieved in the 12-week implementation period.

Premack's Principle (Premack, 1959) can be initiated with any behavior management system. Rewards were earned by meeting the pre-specified behavioral objectives. Students received the reinforcement after the instructional session was completed.

Skinner, Cashwell, and Dunn (1996) suggested that interdependent group contingency management could be implemented for each of the instructional groups. Tangible reinforcement was earned for group behavior as opposed to individual behavior. This system reinforced the importance of group cohesion.

Positive reinforcement, as described by Goldstein & McGinnis (1997) was an effective method of managing behavior in the social-skill instructional group. The seven steps presented by Goldstein and McGinnis stated guidelines to using positive reinforcement effectively. The teacher implemented each of the suggestions in the classroom environment with very few modifications.

The four categories described by Jones (1996) as interventions for SED students are sensible and were included in the social-skill instructional program. The behavior checklist helped to determine ecological/environmental factors that may have caused behavior problems. Skills were taught through the social-skill instructional curriculum. A contingency management system was developed. Affective-based lessons to increase self-esteem were adapted from the social-skill curriculum.

Colvin, Ainge, and Nelson (1997) suggested techniques that will help to defuse confrontations that may occur during a social-skill instructional group. Each of the three suggestions has merit and was practiced during the social-skill instructional group. Many of the disruptions to the social-skill instructional group fell into the category of minor attention-getting behaviors. The continuum described by Colvin, Ainge, and Nelson seemed to be a practical, efficient manner to deal with these behaviors.

Leach and Tam (1996) discovered that sending negative letters home helped

to decrease inappropriate behaviors in secondary school classrooms. Teachers involved in this study reported that sending the letters took very little time and that the results were well worth the effort. Sending home negative letters is a technique that was done in the practicum work setting.

Horne and Sayger (1990) described several methods that were effective with students demonstrating conduct and oppositional/defiant disorders. The teacher during the social-skill instructional group practiced each technique. Horn and Sager (1990) also suggested that teachers, family and other agencies work together when programming for students with conduct and oppositional/defiant disorders. Communication with the families of the Extended Resource students was done over the telephone as well as through the letters referred to by Leach and Tam (1996). At this time, no students are involved with outside agencies.

Description of Selected Solutions

The Skillstreaming the Adolescent program (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) includes the techniques of modeling, role-playing, performance feedback, and transfer of skills. These features make the program appropriate for teaching social skills according to the social learning theory model described by Matson and Ollendick (1988). The Skillstreaming program also includes suggestions for managing trainee resistance and group management strategies. The positive reinforcement strategies described by Goldstein and McGinnis were included in the solution strategy. Social-skill checklists were also available with the Skillstreaming program. These instruments helped to identify students with similar social-skill deficits. Goldstein and McGinnis suggested grouping students according to similar social-skill deficits.

Groups met for 30-40 minutes (Morgan & Jenson, 1988). Group size was

limited to between three to eight students (Roy, 1993). Groups met at least once per week (Morgan & Jenson, 1988).

Students were given a choice of social skill objectives and chose which ones they would like to learn (Meadows, Neel, Parker, & Timo 1991). Tangible and social reinforcements were used to stimulate appropriate behavior during group instructional sessions (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997). Reinforcement was given to the group for demonstration of group behavioral objectives (Skinner, Cashwell, & Dunn, 1996). Reinforcement occurred after the completion of the behavioral objectives (Premack, 1959).

Defusion techniques as described by Colvin, Ainge, and Nelson (1997) were used when confrontational behavior occurred within the group. Negative letters were sent home after the demonstration of inappropriate behavior (Leach & Tam, 1996). Relaxation and imagery techniques were included in the social-skill training sessions (Patton, 1995). Other professionals were included in the training procedure, such as the school social worker and the speech/language therapist (Horne & Sayger, 1990).

Report of Action Taken

Week One: The author met with the instructional assistant, social worker, and the speech/language therapist to discuss the social-skill instructional program and their roles. Audiotapes provided by the authors of the *Skillstreaming the Adolescent* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) program were made available to the instructional assistant, speech/language therapist, and the social worker. All students were given the student version of the *Skillstreaming Checklist* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997). Both of the teachers assigned to the Extended Resource program and the instructional assistant monitored individual students and gave assistance when necessary. Both

teachers and the instructional assistant completed the teacher version of the *Skillstreaming Checklist* (Goldstein & McGinnis). Four groups were formed based upon the results of the student and teacher checklists. Students with similar skill deficits were grouped together, creating the first two groups. The boys made up the third group, and the girls made up the fourth group. A schedule of instructional sessions was developed and distributed to the principal, social worker, speech/language therapist, and Extended Resource staff.

Week Two: Instructional sessions were initiated. The author began each session with a positive introductory statement and the behavioral expectations for the session. The author explained the theory of interdependent group contingency to the students. The author explained the format of the lessons including modeling, role-playing, performance feedback, and homework. Three groups met this week. The author acted as the trainer for each group and the social worker and the instructional assistant acted as co-trainers. The initial session began with Skill 1: "Listening". Skill cards were distributed to each student. The author explained that the cards contained the skill steps necessary to complete the given skill. The author initiated a discussion of each skill step and wrote each on a chalkboard. The trainer and co-trainer modeled the skill using each step as listed on the board. Volunteers were asked to role-play using prescribed scenarios from the text and improvisation. Other group members were asked to give feedback to the student role-playing the skill. The trainer needed to coach the students to give feedback to the actor, not to the trainer. Homework report sheets were distributed to the students. The trainer explained the procedure to complete the report to the groups. Each of the three groups earned the reward of a juice and a snack from the classroom store.

Week Three: Groups met on three of the five days this week. Audiotaping was attempted, but due to technical difficulties, only one of the sessions was actually recorded. The trainer explained that the tape would be used as a comparison with later groups to demonstrate improvement. Each session began with a review of the homework from the previous lesson. Skill cards were distributed for Skill 2: " Starting a Conversation". The speech/language therapist and the instructional assistant acted as co-trainers this week. One group, the girls, did not get the introductory lesson (listening) and was instructed in that skill following the same procedure as indicated in week 2. A concern regarding the cognitive and language ability of several students arose after these sessions. Two students have not volunteered to role-play, give performance feedback, or complete a homework report.

Week Four: The author recorded each group this week to obtain a sample from each of the four groups. The author spoke to each of the two students who have not participated and discussed the importance of actively participating in the sessions. The author explained that every student is expected to role-play and give performance feedback, as well as complete the homework reports. Each was reminded that the reward for the group was contingent upon each student behaving appropriately. Both students responded by volunteering to give feedback during at least one session this week. The author verbally praised their efforts and awarded an extra snack after the groups in honor of their participation. Skill 3: "Having a Conversation" and Skill 4: "Asking a Question" were taught. Plans for a reward party were made with the Extended Resource teacher.

Week Five: Several groups began with initial behavioral difficulties. Acting-out, bullying, and angry language preceded the girls group in particular. The author

took this opportunity to introduce the technique of self-talk inoculations (Eggert, 1994). This helped to calm the group and get the students focused on the instructional task, Skill 5: "Saying Thank You". No reward was earned. In one of the other groups, an 8th grade boy refused to participate and disrupted the session by calling-out during the instruction, insulting the other members of the group, and physically leaving the instructional area. Although the trainer attempted to refocus the student's behavior by ignoring, speaking to the student privately, and reminding the student of the consequences of his behavior on the group, it was necessary to send the student to the time-out center for the remainder of the period. Skill lesson 6: "Introducing Yourself" and skill lesson 7: "Introducing Other People" were introduced. The author met with the instructional assistant, the social worker, and the speech/language therapist to discuss their impressions of the instructional groups to this date. A negative letter was drafted and sent to the home of the eighth grade boy who was sent to the time-out center.

Week 6: None of the co-trainers were available this week. The author solicited help from the school psychiatrist and another instructional assistant from the building. The students were impressed that other staff members would come to help with their session. Role-playing and performance feedback from the students is improving. An issue with the other Extended Resource teacher arose that affected the temperament of all students in one group. Each was convinced that the teacher had slighted them because of a reward she gave to the eighth grade students, but not to them. The trainer took this opportunity to introduce a relaxation and imagery technique (Eggert, 1994). The group was able to relax and complete the skill lesson for the day. Skill lesson 8: "Giving a Compliment" was practiced this week. The

trainer used the other sessions this week to review lessons one through eight with the groups. Students were given the opportunity to select a skill that they particularly enjoyed and asked to role-play for the group. Comical scenarios were selected and the students seemed to enjoy this review activity. Invitations to the reward party were distributed. Students were encouraged to invite family members. Students were also asked which staff members they would like to have attend the party.

Week Seven: The trainer used a flip chart to list the skill lessons from groups II-VI. The trainer discussed each group and the lessons contained within each group. The girls group voted to practice lessons from Group IV: "Skill Alternatives to Aggression" during their next sessions. The students from one of the smaller groups voted to practice lessons from Group V: "Skills for Dealing with Stress". One student, the 8th grade boy mentioned earlier, was upset because the others did not choose his selection. To avoid losing him, the trainer suggested a compromise. The students agreed to practice lessons from Group IV and from Group V on alternating sessions. All of the students have begun to participate in one way or another. Both of the students who were holding back have begun to role-play and give performance feedback. One of these students is convinced that his grade will suffer if he does not do his homework. Initial silliness in one of the groups was curbed by the mention of the negative letter that was sent home. The trainer noticed that members of one group were angry with one another during lunch. By the time the session occurred, the anger had subsided. The eighth grade boy has become antisocial. He insists on putting a cardboard divider between himself and the other group members. After initially ignoring the behavior, the trainer spoke to this student privately and refocused him. The student did not role-play but he did give performance feedback.

Week Eight: A new student joined the Extended Resource program this week. The student had been receiving services through a day treatment program in another part of the state. He was used to group therapy sessions and adjusted to the social-skill instructional sessions. The eighth grade boy who had been demonstrating non-compliant and acting-out behavior escalated this behavior after the new student entered the group. Another negative letter was sent home. One of the students who was not participating earlier (week three) has now begun to volunteer to role-play. This week he volunteered to model with the trainer when a co-trainer was not available. The availability of co-trainers has been limited because of PPT meetings scheduled during social-skill instructional time. The trainer has solicited other students to help model the skills before role-playing.

Week Nine: Groups continued to meet on a regularly scheduled basis. The social worker and speech/language therapist were able to join the groups again this week. The instructional assistant has become a favorite role-play partner with the group members, especially when the scenario calls for a mother or an older family member. During one group, the students earned their reward but passed on staying a little late to receive the juice and snacks. They made comments such as, "No problem" and "It's all good". It seems that the social reinforcement is taking the place of the tangible reinforcement. The trainer continued to make the snacks and juice available. The awards ceremony was held at the end of this week. All of the students received a certificate of accomplishment for successfully completing the first Group: Beginning Social Skills. The author made a speech during the ceremony acknowledging the hard work and cooperation that has gone into the social-skill instructional sessions. Family members, teachers, administrators, and members of the

student services staff were present. All were impressed. Ice cream sundaes were served.

Week Ten: One 7th grade girl, who is prescribed medication to help control her behavior, did not receive her regularly scheduled dose. She disrupted the group with strange behavior, unintelligible muttering, and inappropriate movement. Another group member became extremely annoyed with this behavior. The trainer tried to ignore the behavior, but tensions escalated. Two other group members went out of their way to separate the angry student from the disruptive student. The trainer let the group members resolve the problem. Later in the week, the trainer was not able to meet with the boy's group until 15 minutes into the session. When the trainer arrived, the group was sitting around a large table, chatting pleasantly among themselves, while under the supervision of the social worker. The trainer sat down and observed them for a few minutes. The trainer interrupted the boys to explain how proud he was of the manner they responded to an unexpected change of routine. The trainer further explained that the point of social-skill instruction is to teach young people to do just what they were practicing. The trainer allowed the group to continue their discussion. The trainer awarded the group with snacks and juice. The boys shared the snacks amongst themselves without any argument. The trainer gave out a second round of snacks, restating the high level of social-skill development that the group was demonstrating.

Week Eleven: Groups continued to meet and choose the lessons that they wanted to practice. Although there has been some initial silliness before most of the groups, this behavior always subsides before the session begins. The trainer has begun to place the juice and snacks on a desk in front of the group before the sessions

begin. The trainer has met with the social worker, speech/language therapist, and instructional assistant to discuss strengths and weakness of the social-skill instructional groups. Groups have begun to focus on the combination of earlier skills to successfully practice new, more advanced skills. Many discussions have been stimulated through the skill lessons that are important to the students.

Week Twelve: Students were given the student version of the *Skillstreaming Checklist*. Tapes were played from earlier session to allow students to compare their skills at role-playing and giving performance feedback from the beginning to the end of the sessions. The results from the *Skillstreaming Checklists* will be shared with the students to show the students the difference between their perceptions before and after 12 weeks of *Skillstreaming* training. The author met with the social worker, instructional assistant, and the speech/language therapist to discuss the future of the social-skill instructional program, gather opinions and comparisons to last year, and request suggestions for improvement.

Chapter V: Results

Results

The problem addressed in this practicum was that students in the Extended Resource program demonstrated acting-out, withdrawn, and immature behavior during social-skill instructional group more than during other classes. By decreasing the size of the groups (Matson & Ollendick, 1988), increasing the tangible reinforcement (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997), and using the Structured Learning (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) approach to instruction, the author attempted to increase positive behavior during the social-skill instructional group. The use of behavior modification strategies such as the defusion techniques described by Colvin, Ainge, and Nelson (1997) were utilized. Negative letters were sent home to the families of disruptive students (Leach & Tan, 1996). Relaxation techniques and rational behavioral training (Eggert, 1994; Patton, 1995) were introduced. Reinforcement was given only after the entire group earned at least an 8 of 10 on the classroom behavior-rating chart (Skinner, Cashwell, & Dunn, 1996; Premack, 1959). Students were given a choice as to which skills they wanted to learn (Meadows, Neal, Parker, & Timo, 1991). The social worker and the speech/language therapist were included in the instructional sessions (Horne & Sayger, 1990). The goal of this practicum was to motivate students to demonstrate self-control, participate in the social-skill instructional lessons, and engage in developmentally appropriate behavior during social-skill instruction.

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum:

Outcome 1. Each student will earn an average of eight points on the classroom behavior-rating chart over the 12-week implementation period. The

teacher will observe the students during the social-skill instructional lessons and will record student behavior using (+) or (0) scoring on the 10-item behavior checklist. The total behavioral objectives met over the course of the session will be summed and recorded. These totals for each session will be averaged for each student at the completion of the implementation period.

This outcome was met. Table 3 shows the mean scores of the 10 Extended Resource students on the classroom behavior-rating chart over the 12-week implementation period. This group was different from the group represented in the data from table 1 do to the fact that many of the students from the first group were promoted or moved from the district before the implementation period. The mean scores ranged from 9.21 to 8.0. The number of sessions varied for each student due to scheduling. The high number of sessions was 21 (student 9) and the low number was 8 (student 10). Student 10 joined the Extended Resource program on 5/18/99.

Outcome 2. During the course of the 12-week implementation period, each student will receive no more than two referrals to the time-out center because of inappropriate behavior in the social-skill instructional group. Each referral will be collected throughout the implementation period. A tally will be completed after the completion of the implementation period.

This outcome was met. Table 4 shows the referrals to the time-out center because of misbehavior during the social-skill instructional group over the course of the 12-week implementation period. This group was different from the group represented in Table 3 because many of those students were promoted or moved from the district before the implementation period. During this time, only one student was sent to the time-out center.

Outcome 3. Of the 10 students participating in the social-skill instructional group, at least 6 students will indicate that they have positive feelings regarding the social-skill instructional group after the 12-week implementation period. Measurement of feelings will be done through a teacher-made survey. Of the 10 students participating in the social-skill instructional group, at least 6 students will respond that they enjoy the social-skill group instruction and have no bad feelings

Table 3

Post Intervention Means on Classroom Behavior-Rating Checklist for Extended Resource Students

Student	Mean
01	9.1
02	9.1
03	9.0
04	8.9
05	8.5
06	8.3
07	9.2
08	8.0
09	8.8
10	8.9

Note. The highest possible number of points on the rating-scale was 10. A score of 8 was considered acceptable.

associated with receiving social-skill training. Of the 10 students participating in the social-skill instructional group, at least 6 students will respond that they would not change the format of the social-skill instructional group. Of the 10 students

participating in the social-skill instructional group, at least 6 students will respond that they try their best to make positive contributions to the group.

This outcome was met. Students were given a survey and asked to indicate their responses to five items. The results of this survey are found in Appendix C. Of the 10 Extended Resource students, 8 responded that they enjoyed the social-skill instructional group very much. Of the 10 students, 10 responded that they felt good about social-skill instructional group and that they enjoyed learning how to improve

Table 4

Pre and Post Intervention Time-out Center Referrals of Extended Resource Students

Group two (Post-intervention)	Time-out Center Referrals
01	0
02	0
03	0
04	0
05	0
06	0
07	0
08	1
09	0
10	0

their behavior. Of the 10 students, 8 responded that they would not change the length of the sessions and that they thought that it was fine the way it is. Of the 10

students, 6 responded that they listened and tried their best during the social-skill instructional group sessions.

Discussion

The results show that the desired outcomes were achieved. The students responded to the structured learning model of instruction as well as the behavior management techniques employed by the author. The *Skillstreaming the Adolescent* program (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997) provided a consistent lesson plan. Each lesson included modeling of the skill to be learned. During each lesson, students were given the opportunity to role play the skill using the steps suggested by the authors of the program. Students were then given the opportunity to give the actors performance feedback according to their observations of the role-play scenario. A homework report was given after each session. Students were required to fill-in the report and share with the group about how they used the new skill in another setting. This model provided the students with the structure and consistency to feel comfortable with the group setting. The overall positive behavior of the group over the 12-week period is evidence of this.

Another technique suggested by Goldstein and McGinnis (1997) involved grouping the students. The strategy of grouping the students with identical elements was suggested. This involved grouping students together who spent time in the same classes. Since the boys and girls met in separate pragmatic speech and language groups led by the social worker and speech/language therapist, the boys and girls were grouped separately for social-skill instructional group. Besides these two groups, determining a shared skill deficit formed two more groups. Skill deficits were determined through the *Teacher Skillstreaming Checklist* (Goldstein &

McGinnis, 1997) and the *Student Skillstreaming Checklist* (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997). Both of the Extended Resource teachers and the instructional assistant completed the *Teacher* checklist and each student completed the *Student* checklist. These consisted of 50 items presented in a Likert-style. Those students who rated themselves low in certain areas, as well as being rated by the three teachers as low in those areas were grouped together. All four groups were between three and six students. The relatively small groups and the select composition of the groups made the observation of behaviors easier for the trainer.

The author, acting as lead trainer over the 12-week implementation period, opened each group session with a positive verbal message. By making introductory statements such as, "We are going to practice a new social skill today. I know that all of you know how serious I take this and I expect that you will too" and "I have noticed an improvement each time we meet for social-skill instruction group. Let's keep up the good work today", the author set a positive tone for each lesson.

Audiotaping sessions also motivated the students to behave as appropriately as they could. By knowing that they were being taped, students responded by being cooperative and participating in the lessons. There were several instances of "showing off" during taping. These were infrequent and non-malicious. At no time did this behavior disrupt the group to the point of needing more than a redirection statement to get back on track.

Students were motivated by the opportunity to earn snacks from the classroom store without having to spend their points. The trainer would display juice, candy, and baked goods on a desk in front of the group. The trainer explained that each student would be allowed to select a juice and a snack after a successful group. The

trainer explained that a successful group would include all students earning at least eight points on the classroom behavior-rating checklist. Although the students were quite familiar with the behavioral objectives used as indicators of successful behavior, the trainer explained each in detail before the initial group session.

As was expected, several group members who were highly motivated by the possibility of the reward acted as monitors for the rest of the group. Often these students would reprimand their peers if they felt that the behavior was getting out of hand. Statements such as "Come on, I want to get some of that good stuff" and " Let's have a good group today, I'm hungry" were heard from the group throughout the implementation period.

There were several instances of students entering the group sessions angry with one another. At these times the trainer introduced the technique from rational behavioral training (Patton, 1995) known as self-talk inoculations. This technique involved teaching students to send themselves positive messages to replace the negative, angry messages that occur during times of anger. Another technique that worked well during times when students arrived angry from incidents that occurred outside of the group was guided imagery and progressive relaxation (Eggert, 1994). By teaching the group that they could relax and put their minds in another state by these methods, much of the anger was released before the group began.

Several times other members of the group would intervene to keep others from fighting. This could have been the result of many different causes. It is the opinion of the author that this behavior was the result of increased social-skill development.

Once the first "group" of skills from the *Skillstreaming* program was

introduced and practiced, an awards ceremony was held. Parents and family members were invited to attend. The principal, assistant principal, counselors, social worker, and speech/language therapist also attended. Students were treated to an ice cream party and given certificates of achievement for participation and completion of the unit titled "Beginning Social Skills". This ceremony coincided with the third quarter report cards. Students were also awarded certificates of merit for their academic achievements at this time. Combining the social-skill awards with the academic awards gave credence to the social-skill instructional group.

For the remainder of the implementation period (approximately five weeks) students were allowed to choose the skill that they wanted to study. This was done through a vote of the group members. The trainer wrote each skill lesson from the remaining five groups on a large flip-chart. Before each session, the trainer would review the choices available. Being able to choose what they were to learn gave the students a feeling of control over the lesson. This translated into cooperative behavior.

Other professionals were included in the planning and implementation of the social-skill instructional groups. The instructional assistant from the Extended Resource program completed the *Teacher* version of the *Skillstreaming Checklist*. She also studied the audiotapes made available from the authors of the program. The instructional assistant was the co-trainer for seven of the sessions over the 12-week implementation period. The speech/language therapist also studied the audiotapes from *Skillstreaming the Adolescent*. The speech/language therapist was the co-trainer for four instructional sessions. The social worker was the co-trainer for four sessions. The addition of these professionals in the training process provided extra supervision

and an adult presence in the room during instructional time. This, coupled with the novelty of using one of these people as a partner in a role-play scenario, kept the students interested in the lessons. The author consulted with these people throughout the implementation period concerning strengths and weaknesses of the groups.

One student, an eighth grade boy diagnosed as seriously emotionally disturbed, had a great deal of difficulty maintaining self-control during the instructional group sessions. This lack of self-control manifested itself in the form of disruptive comments, inappropriate role-playing, and withdrawing from the group. This behavior began almost immediately after a new student joined the Extended Resource program approximately eight weeks into the implementation period. The new student was also an eighth-grader. During the 12-week implementation period, only this one student was sent to the time out center because of inappropriate behavior during the social-skill instructional group. Only this one student had negative letters sent home. It is the opinion of the author that the student was attempting to demonstrate his place as the "toughest kid in the class" during the group through noncompliance and disruptive behavior.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested:

1. Before using the *Skillstreaming the Adolescent* program, review the text and determine if the students have the cognitive and language skills to effectively complete the lessons. There are other social-skill instructional programs available for students that have lower cognitive and speech/language abilities.
2. Research other methods and techniques for teaching social skills to exceptional students and combine these with the *Skillstreaming* program. If anger

management is an issue with the group, find strategies that address anger management and so forth.

3. Keep the groups between 3-8 students. If groups of this size cannot be scheduled, use another program. Behavior management of larger groups will be difficult do to the amount of coaching and role-playing of the trainer and co-trainers.
4. Continue to make adjustments. Each group will have different needs and issues. Address these as opposed to keeping a strict adherence to the *Skillstreaming* program.
5. Consult with the student support staff at the school or institution. Other professionals have insight into methods of affective instruction that will be beneficial to the success of the instructional program.

Dissemination

This practicum will be shared with other Extended Resource teachers throughout the district. The teachers who work with adolescents (grades 7-12) will benefit from the *Skillstreaming the Adolescent* program as described in this paper. Elementary teachers will be informed of the *Skillstreaming the Elementary Student* program (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997). Throughout the year special education teachers and student service personnel meet to discuss district policy, news from the state, and current issues. Plans are being made to share this practicum at the first meeting of the 1999-2000 school year.

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APPENDIX A

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR-RATING CHECKLIST

Classroom Behavior-Rating Checklist

Date	Student	Entered classroom appropriately	Had proper materials	In seat on time	Used quiet voice	Used materials appropriately	Followed directions	Appropriate interactions with teacher	Appropriate interactions with classmates	Used time wisely	Completed assigned task	TOTAL

APPENDIX B

PRE-INTERVENTION SURVEY OF SOCIAL-SKILL INSTRUCTIONAL GROUP

Social Skills Group Survey

1. Do you enjoy social skills group?

   __7__ Yes, very much.

   __2__ Yes, but not as much as other classes.

   __1__ No, but I get through it as best as I can.

   __4__ No, I don't enjoy the group at all.

2. What would you do to improve social skills group?

   __8__ More role playing.

   __2__ More real-life situations.

   __6__ Less talk, more action.

   __1__ Other (Please use the lines below to write your response.)

   "I'd like to learn how to get along with people that I don't like"

3. How does instruction in social skills make you feel?

   __5__ Good. I enjoy learning how I can improve my behavior.

   __2__ Kind of uncomfortable. I don't understand some of the lessons.

   __6__ Bad. I really don't like the idea that I need social skills instruction.

4. How long do you think group should be?

   __7__ All period. I think it's fine the way it is.

   __2__ Half the period. I get bored if the lesson goes on any longer.

   __5__ No group. I would like to see group cancelled.

5. During social skills group, I usually ___.

   __6__ Listen and participate my best.

   __3__ Try, but kind of get bored and distracted.

   __1__ Try to find anything else to keep me entertained.

   __2__ Disrupt by talking, fooling around, etc.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS. YOU WILL NOT BE GRADED ON THIS SURVEY

APPENDIX C

POST-INTERVENTION SURVEY OF SOCIAL-SKILL INSTRUCTIONAL GROUP

. Social Skills Group Survey (6/18/99)

6. Do you enjoy social skills group?

   __8__ Yes, very much.

   __0__ Yes, but not as much as other classes.

   __2__ No, but I get through it as best as I can.

   __0__ No, I don't enjoy the group at all.

7. What would you do to improve social skills group?

   __4__ More role playing.

   __2__ More real-life situations.

   __3__ Less talk, more action.

   __0__ Other (Please use the lines below to write your response.)

   _____

   _____

8. How does instruction in social skills make you feel?

   __10__ Good. I enjoy learning how I can improve my behavior.

   __0__ Kind of uncomfortable. I don't understand some of the lessons.

   __0__ Bad. I really don't like the idea that I need social skill instruction.

9. How long do you think group should be?

   __8__ All period. I think it's fine the way it is.

   __2__ Half the period. I get bored if the lesson goes on any longer.

   __0__ No group. I would like to see group cancelled.

10. During social skills group, I usually ___.

    __6__ Listen and participate my best.

    __2__ Try, but kind of get bored and distracted.

    __1__ Try to find anything else to keep me entertained.

    __1__ Disrupt by talking, fooling around, etc.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS. YOU WILL NOT BE GRADED ON THIS SURVEY.